

COURSE 1 - 2025
Basic Discipleship

The
JOURNEY
STEP FIVE



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We are so glad you're here! As you step into this journey of discipleship, know that you are entering a path designed to deepen your relationship with God and build a firm biblical foundation. This material is meant to guide you, no matter where you are on your faith journey. The tools and lessons you'll find here are adaptable to many settings—whether you're meeting one-on-one, gathering with a small group, or sharing in a larger community. It can be simplified to nurture the hearts of youth and children or enriched to challenge and inspire mature believers to grow even further.

Discipleship is a journey, not a race.

Our prayer is that this journey will help you engage with Scripture, build meaningful relationships, and discover how God is working in and through your life. Let's take this next step together with faith and intentionality as we grow closer to Him. Trust the process of growth and transformation that occurs over time as you walk with God.



05

THE BIBLE



I. THE BIBLE'S COMPOSITION

OVERVIEW

The Bible is the Word of God, and is the one and only Scripture for Christians. It has two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Within this division there are 66 individual books.

As a whole, the Bible offers a comprehensive account of God's relationship with humanity, spanning 1500 years and composed by at least 40 human authors, who were guided by the Holy Spirit (this is what we mean by "inspired" or the "inspiration of Scripture"). As we engage with its pages, we discover not only the historical account of God's dealings with His people but also a living Word that speaks to our own lives and circumstances today.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament (also known as the Hebrew Bible) recounts the creation of the world by God and the establishment of His covenants with humanity, particularly through figures like Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.

It also chronicles the history of the Israelite people, from their enslavement in Egypt to their liberation under Moses' leadership and their journey to the Promised Land. It contains the conquering of this land, the time of Judges, the rise of the monarchy, and the civil war that split Israel in two. It tells of Israel and Judah's fall to the powers of Assyria and Babylon, their time in captivity, and their eventual return to their homeland.

Throughout this narrative, prophets (such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others) emerge to guide and admonish the people, calling them to faithfulness and warning of the consequences of disobedience. Ultimately, the Old Testament points forward to the coming of the Messiah (Jesus), whose arrival would fulfill God's promises and bring the possibility of salvation to everyone in all nations.





THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament focuses primarily on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It begins with the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) which offer unique perspectives on Jesus' ministry and serve as the cornerstone of Christian faith. The Acts of the Apostles follows the spread of Christianity after Jesus' ascension, detailing the early church's growth and the missionary journeys of the apostles.

The New Testament also includes epistles or letters written by early Christian leaders such as Paul, Peter, James, and John. These letters often address various theological, ethical, and practical issues facing the newer Christian communities, which remain relevant today. Lastly, the book of Revelation, by the apostle John, provides apocalyptic visions showing the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom and the promise of a new heaven and earth.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS RELIABLE

HISTORICAL ACCURACY

The Bible often talks about real people and places that we know existed. Many of the customs and cultures mentioned in the Bible match what we've learned from other history books. Also, the Bible gives detailed stories about events that happened long ago, and these stories match up with what we already know from history. Often, we find things years later that confirm details of the Bible that were once doubted.

The existence of King David, once questioned by skeptics, has been supported by the discovery of the Tel Dan Stele (a stone carving), which references the "House of David."

The New Testament mentions various rulers and political figures, such as Pontius Pilate (also formerly questioned by skeptics), whose existence and role were confirmed by the Pilate Stone and other historical documents.

PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled accurately over time, supporting its divine inspiration and reliability. All of its prophecies have either been fulfilled, or will be fulfilled in the future. Of particular interest are the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus as the coming Messiah:

The Old Testament contains many prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, such as Isaiah 53, which describe in detail the life, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter Stoner, a professor of mathematics and astronomy, wrote "Science Speaks." In this work, Stoner applied the principles of probability to the prophecies about Jesus. Stoner selected eight specific prophecies about the Messiah and conservatively calculated the probability of any one person fulfilling all eight by chance are 1 in 10^{17} (1 in a hundred quadrillion). Further, the odds of 48 of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled are 1 in 10^{157} .

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

The Bible has, by far, more manuscript evidence supporting its authenticity and consistency over time than any other ancient document. The sheer number of copies and the short time-span between the original writings and the surviving manuscripts are unparalleled.

The New Testament alone has over 5,800 Greek manuscripts, some of which date to within a few decades of the original texts. This is a stark contrast to other ancient works, like those of Homer and Herodotus, which have far fewer manuscripts with much larger gaps in time.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in the 20th century, include some of the oldest surviving manuscripts of the Old Testament. They were written well before Jesus physically lived on earth. These scrolls showed remarkable consistency with later copies, affirming the careful transmission of biblical texts over thousands of years.

The extensive and early manuscript evidence supports the Bible's textual integrity and its faithful transmission through history.



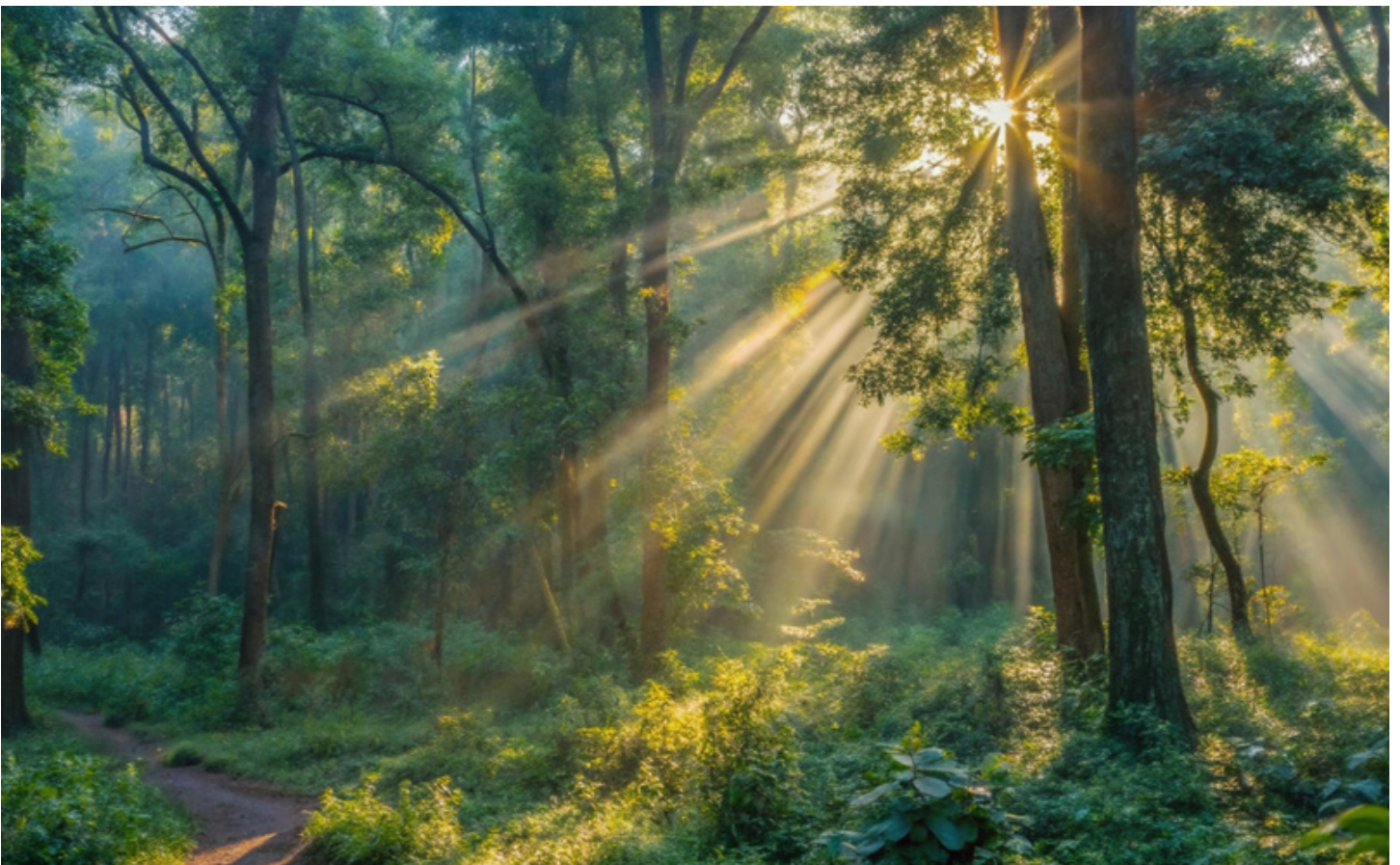
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AGREEMENT

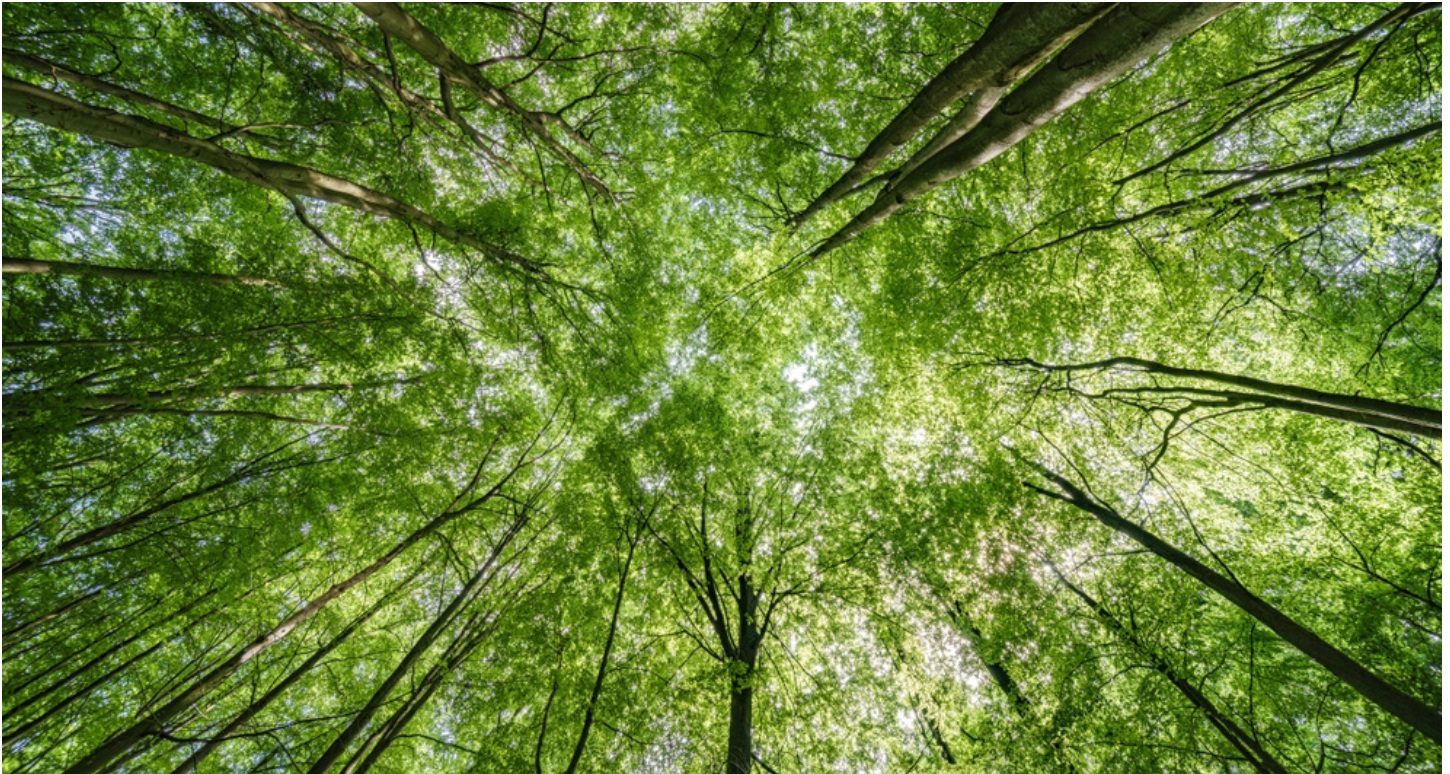
Archaeologists have repeatedly confirmed details found in the Bible through discoveries, from the existence of cities and kingdoms to specific practices and events.

Excavations at Jericho and the discovery of its ancient walls provide fascinating insights into the biblical account of the city's conquest in the Book of Joshua (disproving skeptics).

The Pool of Bethesda, mentioned in the Gospel of John as a place where Jesus healed a man, was discovered in the 19th century, validating the New Testament's descriptions (again disproving the skeptics).

Archaeology has continually shed light on the Bible's historical and cultural contexts, corroborating its accounts and supporting its reliability. While skeptics are always raising questions and objections, over time the Bible remains undefeated.





WHAT THE BIBLE CLAIMS ABOUT ITSELF

The Bible is not a collection of books made to say something about itself that it actually does not. Instead, the Bible has many claims about itself regarding its divine inspiration, authority, and purpose. The Bible presents itself as the Word of God.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 | *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”*

2 PETER 1:16, 20-21 | *“For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”*

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

These claims are consistent throughout the Bible and provide a framework for its significance in the lives of believers.

*Additional
Scripture
References*

PSALM 19:7-8
ISAIAH 55:11
HEBREWS 4:12



INFALLIBLE AND INERRANT

Because of all this and more, we believe the Bible can be described by two fairly technical words:

Infallible and Inerrant.

We believe the Bible is infallible in that it is inspired by God and won't fail to achieve the purpose for which God intended: as a wholly trustworthy guide to salvation, faith, and practice. We can fully rely on the Bible's teachings for our beliefs and actions.

We also believe the Bible to be inerrant in its original manuscripts, containing no errors or contradictions. In the rare instances where doubt arises about the alignment of our current Bible with the originals, good study Bibles clearly point these out. Thus, we have 100% confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the Bible we possess.

III. FAQs ON READING YOUR BIBLE

WHAT BIBLE SHOULD I USE?

There are well over 100 different English translations and paraphrases of the Bible out there, including a handful of very good ones. We most often use and recommend the NIV translation, which is the New International Version. The NIV is a good blend of a solid translation paired with good readability. An NIV study Bible would be a great place to start, and you can purchase one online or in a bookstore.

You can also access many Bible translations online, including the NIV. One great free app is YouVersion. You can find it with a simple search on Google's Google Play Store, Apple's IOS App Store, or at www.youversion.com.

WHERE SHOULD I START?

The Bible is not like most other books, as there are 66 individual books inside. You certainly can start at the beginning, like other books, if you'd like. However, we recommend that you start in the Book of Luke. Luke was writing to Gentiles (that's us!) and he particularly highlights Jesus' inclusivity of women and the poor, along with the message that salvation is for everyone, regardless of social status or ethnicity.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD I READ?

Quality is better than quantity when it comes to reading the Bible.

We suggest reading one chapter a day is good. Reading slowly and thoughtfully is the way to go.

You might read the same chapter multiple times, asking yourself three questions along the way:

“What does this say?”

“What does this mean?”

“How can I apply this today?”

*Additional
Scripture
References*

MARK 1:35

LUKE 5:16

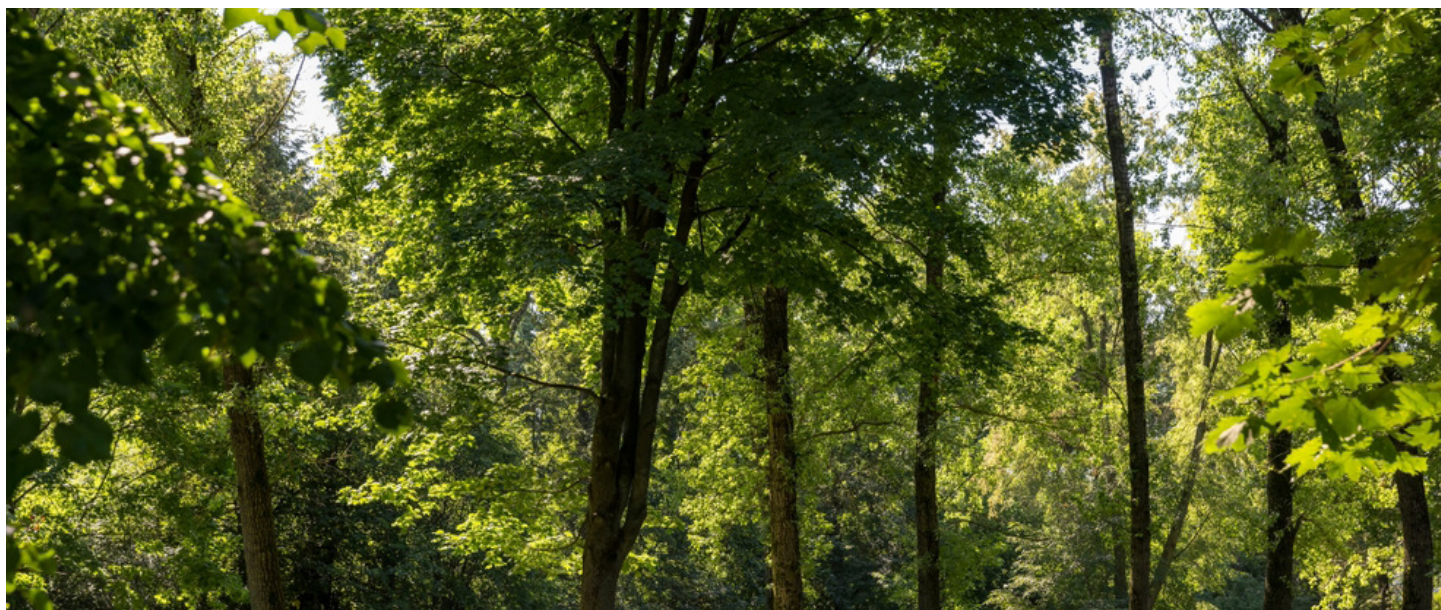
LUKE 6:12

LUKE 22:41

HOW DOES READING MY BIBLE IMPACT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?

Just as any personal relationship requires an investment of time (you can't microwave a relationship), it's the same in our relationship with Jesus. If you want a deeper relationship with Jesus, you'll spend time reading, meditating on, and even memorizing verses in the Bible. The motivation for all these things is not obligation, pride of accomplishment, or "box checking," but rather to spend time with Jesus in order to get to know Him better.

Along with prayer, reading the Word of God is one of the best things you can do to set a firm foundation of growth for your Christian life.



NOTES

Want to dive deeper into your journey?

Scan the QR code for an in-depth exploration of Step 5: The Bible



NOTE: All verses are quoted from the NIV translation. The Bible remains the ultimate authority for understanding who God is.

BASIC DISCIPLESHIP STEP FIVE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ice Breaker Questions

Growing up, what role did the Bible play in your family? What were your thoughts on it? How did these thoughts change over time?

How much of the Bible (if any) have you read? Do you feel like it's hard to read? Does the fact that the timeline is not totally linear throw you off at all?

Question 1 - *The Bible's Composition*

How comfortable are you with the overall format of the Bible? Do you have any questions about the big picture?

Question 2 - *Prophetic Fulfillment*

What comes to mind when you hear the words "Old Testament?" What parts of the Old Testament are you most familiar with, and what parts are you the least familiar with?

Question 3 - *Manuscript Evidence*

Are you already comfortable and familiar with how the New Testament is ordered? (Gospels, Acts, letters, Revelation)

Question 4 - *Historical Accuracy*

Is the historical accuracy of the Bible easy or challenging for you to accept and why?

Question 5 - *Prophetic Fulfillment*

Have you ever read Isaiah 53? If not, let's do that together now, and take turns reading it!

Question 6 - *Prophetic Fulfillment*

Do these numbers make sense to you or leave you scratching your head? If you had the chance to play Powerball with these odds, would you take it? Why or why not?

Question 7 - *Manuscript Evidence*

Why do you think it is so important that the words of the Bible we have today match the words of the originals when they were written?

Question 8 - *Archaeological Agreement*

What do you think it would feel like to be an archaeologist and find something that literally confirms part of the Bible, especially something that had long been questioned?

Question 9 - *FAQs on Reading Your Bible*

Are you reading a chapter in your Bible each day? When/where is best for you?



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